PHIL 4520: Stoicism  
Thursdays 2:30 – 5:15  
Instructor: Dimitrios Dentsoras  
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Email: Dimitrios.Dentsoras@umanitoba.ca

**Course Description:**

The seminar will provide an overview of Stoicism, focusing on its central epistemological, metaphysical, and ethical theories. We will begin with a discussion of the Stoic theory of knowledge, and of the Stoics’ debate with ancient skeptics regarding the possibility of acquiring knowledge, and the conditions for doing so. We will then give a general outline of Stoic ontology, especially the main Stoic tenets regarding body, the elements, and their interactions. We will conclude our account of Stoic physics by discussing their theological views, focusing on the notion of fate. Following, we will examine the Stoic account of the soul, and of the ways in which the human rational soul moves us to action. The course will conclude with a discussion of Stoic ethics, focusing on the Stoic account of the good, happiness, virtue, and the passions.

**Readings:**


In addition to the primary source collections above, a number of secondary literature articles will be distributed in class throughout the course of the semester.

**Assignments/evaluation:**

There will be two 8-10 page papers. The first paper will be due the week after Thanksgiving, and the second at the end of the semester. Each paper will be worth 45% of the final grade. The remaining 10% will be based on class attendance and participation.

**Academic Integrity:**

Please consult section 7 of the General Academic Regulations and Requirements in your Undergraduate Calendar for information concerning plagiarism and cheating. This information can also be found on the Web at:  
http://webapps.cc.umanitoba.ca/calendar07/regulations/plagiarism.asp
**Tentative course Schedule**

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<th>Week 1</th>
<th>Intro – historical background to Hellenistic period</th>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Epistemology – impressions, cognitions, knowledge</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Stoics vs. skeptics - knowledge’s possibility and conditions</td>
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<td>Week 4</td>
<td>Ontology – bodies, elements, and the world</td>
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<td>Week 5</td>
<td>Natural theology – god; universal and human nature</td>
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<td>Week 6</td>
<td>Causation and fate</td>
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<td>Week 7</td>
<td>Psychology – plant, animal, and human souls</td>
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<td>Week 8</td>
<td>Action theory – from impulse to appropriateness</td>
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<td>Week 9</td>
<td>The Stoic good – theory of appropriation; from natural advantages to indifference</td>
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<td>Week 10</td>
<td>Happiness – debates with Academic skeptics regarding the goal of human life</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Stoic virtue – knowledge, nature, and happiness</td>
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<td>Week 12</td>
<td>Stoic theory of emotions</td>
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